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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: GOJ EASES PALESTINIAN TRAVEL FROM WEST BANK INTO JORDAN

[1](#)1. (SBU) In May 2005 Jordanian Interior Minister Awni Yarfas announced that the GOJ would no longer require Palestinians arriving from "the territories of the Palestinian National Authority" to present a Certificate of Non-Objection in order to be granted entry into Jordan. The Jordanian Ministry of Interior's Inspections Department imposed the requirement for the certificate in 2000 shortly after the outbreak of the intifadah. It appears that this measure was designed to control the number of Palestinians entering Jordan, and that the GOJ feared there would be a surge of West Bankers seeking refuge here. Palestinians inside and outside of Jordan have long lobbied for elimination of the Certificate of Non-Objection requirement, but the GOJ resisted until the May announcement.

[1](#)2. (U) Rather than obtain a Certificate of Non-Objection, all Palestinians crossing into Jordan from the West Bank are now required to sign a document upon their entry in which they pledge they will return to the Palestinian territories upon a specified date of their own choosing. Local media report that the Interior Minister has stated that the pledge will not be enforced with any penal sanctions; rather the government of Jordan will rely on the "good intentions" of the Palestinian travelers. He also announced, however, that "administrative measures" could be assessed against Palestinians who stay past the date specified in their pledges. (NOTE: Jordanian border authorities may still deny entry to Palestinians who they believe may pose a security threat. END NOTE.)

[1](#)3. (U) GOJ statistics show that there has not been a significant influx of Palestinians to Jordan since 2000. Government figures prior to the May 2005 announcement illustrate that for each of the last two years, roughly the same number of Palestinians entered Jordan via the West Bank as departed. The statistics for 2003 and 2004 follow:

2003

-282,010 Palestinians entered Jordan from the West Bank
-281,218 Palestinians exited Jordan for the West Bank

2004 (January 01 - November 30)

-383,421 Palestinians entered Jordan from the West Bank
-388,689 Palestinians exited Jordan for the West Bank

[1](#)4. (U) In 2005, contrary to expectations, more Palestinians departed the country than arrived. The statistics for 2005 follow:

2005 (January 01 - June 04)

-144,493 Palestinians entered Jordan from the West

Bank

-154,048 Palestinians exited Jordan for the West Bank

(June 05 - June 30)

-56,059 Palestinians entered Jordan from the West Bank
-67,108 Palestinians exited Jordan for the West Bank

[1](#)5. (SBU) Comment: Some contacts question the GOJ statistics as they believe the government is trying to downplay the number of Palestinians entering the country. Despite the political sensitivities surrounding this issue, the change in policy has so far received scant attention in the press and generated little public debate.

HALE